



Metro Transit System

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TO: Madison Transit and Parking Commission

FROM: Chuck Kamp, Transit General Manager
Timothy Sobota, Transit Planner

SUBJECT: **Isthmus Bus Stop Management Trial**

Metro Transit has plans to undertake a trial period of bus stop placement management through the Isthmus area of downtown Madison later this Spring. The goal of this management trial is to determine if adjusted spacing between bus stop locations will result in travel time savings to routes traveling through these corridors. Demonstrated success of these management practices could lead to improved on-time performance or faster travel times for passengers commuting through this area, if implemented permanently. Similar management practices could also be extended to other portions of Metro's service area, and would be suited for incorporation into the service standards adopted in future versions of the Transit Development Program (TDP).

The most recent version of the TDP (2004-2008) outlines, in Appendix C, the Service Goals and Standards for Metro service. Bus stop placement standards use the following syntax to describe the spacing requirements for Core Routes (Major Routes service high volume corridors, the downtown area, and other major activity centers):

Bus stop spacing – No greater than $\frac{1}{4}$ mile (or 1,320 feet)

The TDP does not define a minimum spacing threshold for bus stops, and in many instances there are segments of Core Routes with less than even one tenth of a mile (528 feet) between stop locations.

In the area between Blair Street and Baldwin Street on the Isthmus, the block faces typically measure approximately 660 feet in length or an eighth of a mile. Current bus stop placement along East Washington Avenue is typically every two blocks (specifically Blount, Paterson, Ingersoll and Baldwin), or approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile spacing. Bus stops at Brearly Street had been maintained due to trip generation at an alternative school site, but property owner complaints have led to one stop at this intersection being closed some years ago and the alternative school has since relocated as well.

In the Jenifer Street corridor, as well as along the one-way pair of East Gorham and East Johnson, stops are presently located at every intersection between Blount and Baldwin. It is the expectation of Metro staff that bus travel time is being negatively impacted by the two stops made every quarter mile. This travel time impact is a function of the bus needing to decelerate and come to a stop adjacent the curb twice every quarter mile, load and/or unload passengers twice every quarter mile, and then merge from the curb lane back into the flow of traffic twice every quarter mile. The heavy traffic volume on both East Gorham and East Johnson Street likely increase even further the travel time delay of the buses on this side of the Isthmus, as they wait for gaps to merge back into the travel lane from the curbside bus stops.

The bus stop management trial for the Isthmus area will involve a temporary closure of the bus stops serving the intersections of Few Street, Brearly Street and Livingston Street. These are the non-signalized intersections that cross the Isthmus. Along East Washington Avenue, this trial would only impact the one remaining stop at Brearly Street for buses heading westbound towards the Capitol Square. On Jenifer Street, three stops in each direction of travel would be impacted. East Gorham and East Johnson Street would each have three stops impacted as well. During this trial period, bus stops would be in operation every two blocks between Baldwin Street and Blount Street – and instead of up to seven stops being located in this $\frac{3}{4}$ mile distance, there would be only four in a given direction of travel.

Both prior to and during this trial period, Metro will log and then subsequently review bus travel time data for routes traveling along these corridors. The results of this research would return to the Transit and Parking Commission for possible future action as related to the TDP service standards or general policy guidance related to bus stop spacing management practices.